

ABSTRACT

Reinforced ply material having a plurality of reinforcement elements (*e.g.*, steel monofilaments) embedded in an elastomeric (*e.g.*, rubber) sheet. The reinforcement elements are grouped in untwisted sets and each set includes a plurality of reinforcement elements. In an apparatus and/or method for making the reinforced ply material, the reinforcement elements are guided by a guide insert having passages corresponding to the desired grouped arrangement of the reinforcement elements. The reinforced ply material can be used to make steel belts for pneumatic tires.